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Political party: Republican


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Wikipedia

Born: June 28, 1961 (age 59 years)

Net worth: US\$300 million (2018)


Spouse: Dallas Yocum (m. 2013–present)

Movies and TV shows: Absolute Power


Books: What Are the Odds? From the Mind of Mike Lindell


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Michael James Lindell, also known as the "My Pillow Guy," is an American businessman, conspiracy theorist, and the CEO of My Pillow, Inc., a company he founded in 2009. Lindell is a prominent supporter of, and advisor to, former US President Donald Trump. [Wikipedia](#)

**Born:** June 28, 1961 (age 59 years), [Mankato, MN](#)

**Net worth:** US\$300 million (2018)

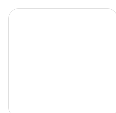
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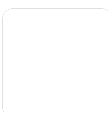
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# My Pillow, the infomercial sensation, flunks out of Better Business Bureau

By **Derek Hawkins**

Jan. 4, 2017 at 4:26 a.m. PST

The list of problems keeps growing for My Pillow, the popular Minnesota-based pillow maker known for its late-night TV infomercials and celebrity endorsements.

Just months after settling a consumer protection lawsuit alleging false and deceptive advertising, My Pillow has taken a hit over a different set of consumer complaints.

On Tuesday, the Better Business Bureau announced that it had revoked My Pillow's accreditation and lowered its rating from an A-plus to an F, saying the company's longstanding "buy one, get one free" offer was unfair and confusing to customers.

The BBB said the offer violated the organization's code of advertising by marketing pillows in a two-for-one "deal" that was in fact the regular price. Consumers might have thought they were getting a special deal, the BBB found, but they were really paying the full cost of the product, as the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported.

"Continuous BOGO offers, which can then be construed as an item's regular, everyday price, violate not only BBB's Code of Advertising, which all BBB Accredited Businesses agree to abide by, but also other state and national organizations' rules," said Dana Badgerow, president of BBB in Minnesota and North Dakota.

Losing BBB accreditation doesn't carry any legal or financial penalties, but it does strip My Pillow of a widely used industry certification designed to help establish consumer trust in a company. The F rating is the lowest mark a company can receive in the BBB's rating system based on a company's complaint history. A company's rating can be lowered when the bureau "determines that the business is not being transparent about its marketplace conduct," among other reasons, according to the BBB website.

Founded in 2005, My Pillow touts its product as the "most comfortable pillow you'll ever own." Founder and spokesman Michael J. Lindell's infomercials, a staple of late-night television, have claimed the pillow can prevent sleep loss associated with a range of ailments. The company has sold some 18 million pillows in the past decade at about \$50 each, pulling in \$100 million annually, as the Star Tribune has reported.

The BBB said it received a "pattern of complaints" about My Pillow's buy one, get one offer. Bureau officials said they began urging Lindell to discontinue the marketing ploy and were left with no choice but to dock the company's rating when he didn't respond, the Star Tribune reported.

Barb Grieman, senior vice president for the BBB in Minnesota, said the bureau seldom gives out F ratings because companies tend to comply.

“We can’t understand why he’s not making the changes,” Grieman told the Star Tribune. “We’re not saying he can’t offer a BOGO, just not continuously all year long.”

According to the BBB, My Pillow should have ended the offer after 30 days.

“It’s unfair to businesses in the same industry,” Grieman said. “We want advertising to be clear.”

Lindell said Tuesday he was disappointed in the BBB’s decision. He told the local NBC affiliate, KARE, that he wouldn’t be able to stop the sale at the moment but would make unspecified changes later this year. In a tweet Tuesday he said he was “sorry about the new rating as my customer service is the most important thing to me.”

The BBB said it has received 232 complaints about My Pillow in the past three years. Most have related to the buy one, get one offer, the BBB said, but the organization said consumers raised other issues as well. Among them were complaints that the pillow advertised on TV was not the same as the one they received and that a “full warranty” required purchasers to pay a fee to return the product, according to [KARE](#).

The bureau’s announcement comes just a few months after My Pillow agreed to pay \$1 million to settle a consumer protection lawsuit alleging the company overstated the benefits of its products. The company had claimed — without evidence — that its pillows could prevent sleep loss from insomnia, restless leg syndrome, neck pain, fibromyalgia, sleep apnea and migraines, raising alarms at the consumer watchdog [Truth in Advertising.org](#), as [The Washington Post](#) reported. The organization also objected to Lindell’s claim that he was a “sleep expert,” when he had no such training. Lindell said he chose to settle the case rather than pay the legal fees to fight it. The company did not admit fault.

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# How My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell and President Trump Became Friends (and Political Allies)

My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell and President Donald Trump have long been political allies

By **Sean Neumann**

March 31, 2020 07:28 PM



CREDIT: MANDEL NGAN/AFP VIA GETTY

The daily White House coronavirus briefing looked more like an episode of *The Apprentice* on Monday, with a line of CEOs pitching the country on how their companies were planning to ramp up efforts to help the United States fight the spread of the coronavirus.

Among the list of CEOs speaking from the White House Rose Garden was Mike Lindell, the head businessman behind the late-night infomercial mainstay “My Pillow” and a Republican donor who passionately praised President Donald Trump’s

efforts in fighting the virus and pledged his company would escalate its own efforts — making upward of 50,000 cotton masks a day.

Afterward, while some critics questioned why Lindell was addressing the nation about coronavirus from the White House, Lindell tells PEOPLE that Trump paused to show him around his D.C. domain.

“Mike, have you been in the Oval Office?” Trump, 73, asked Lindell, whom he called a friend during the briefing moments earlier.

When Lindell told him no, the 58-year-old CEO says Trump told him, “Well, come on, I’ve got to show you!”

Lindell tells PEOPLE the two spent 20 to 25 minutes having a one-on-one conversation in the Oval Office.

The conversation, which took place amid the most large-scale national crisis the United States has seen in decades, highlights a long-growing kinship between the president and the wily, religiously invigorated infomercial barker, which started growing from a random text message Trump sent Lindell in 2016.

Lindell tells PEOPLE he first met Trump in 2016 after the then-Republican candidate invited him up to Trump Tower in New York City, less than two blocks from Central Park where healthcare workers have rushed this week to set up field hospitals to manage the overflow of COVID-19 patients in New York City hospitals. (More than 183,000 cases of the virus have been confirmed across the U.S. and 3,727 have died, according to a *New York Times* tracker monitoring the latest available updates.)

The My Pillow salesman says he didn’t know much about politics in 2016. In fact, before January 2009 when he started to get sober following a well-documented crack addiction, Lindell says he didn’t know anything at all.

“When I quit everything — January 16, 2009 — I had never voted, I didn’t know anything about politics. I didn’t know a liberal from a conservative,” he says.

By their August 15 meeting at Trump Tower in 2016, Lindell says he studied up and “learned a little bit about what each party was,” before meeting with the soon-to-be president.



Lindell says Trump “was just intrigued and he wanted to know” about his My Pillow business and picked the CEO’s brain about his company and his American-based operations.

“After that, I’d see him at different events and stuff and we became friends,” Lindell says.

And Lindell has proudly championed Trump since, appearing in the crowd behind him at campaign rallies, writing glowing editorials in local Minnesota newspapers and digging his heels deeper into his belief that God directly chose Donald Trump to become the president of the United States.

RELATED: Justice Department Begins Probe Into Senators Who Sold Stocks After Coronavirus Briefing: Report

Lindell’s second meeting with Trump came after he was invited to attend a manufacturers summit at the White House in 2017 and was seated directly next to the president.

“It was just surreal,” Lindell says. “Now, my friends all seen that on TV — me sitting next to the president — and they’re going, ‘Wow! This can only be God because there’s no way this ex-crack head is sitting next to the president.’”

Lindell says he believes moments like that, and his appearance at Trump’s press conference on Monday, are part of God’s plan for him to be part of “The Great Revival” and be part of “bringing this country back to God and back to Jesus.”

Lindell says he believed Trump was chosen by God “for such a time as this” and that he’d heed God’s call to run for office if he gets a sign from above.

**michaeljlindell**

The Trump White House Archived

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Thank you [@realdonaldtrump](#) for appointing me Chairman of the Minnesota Trump campaign! We will make Minnesota great again!

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Politico reported that Lindell has been telling associates that he was approached by Trump to run for governor of Minnesota as a Republican in 2022.

Lindell denies the report and tells PEOPLE that he hasn't been approached by Trump or anyone in the administration, but instead a number of governors, congressmen and other former lawmakers have all implored him to run in 2022.

"If I'd gotten prayer to run, I would do it in a second," Lindell tells PEOPLE. "I'm going to do what God wants me to do."

Lindell says South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and former Minnesota Rep. Jason Lewis were among those who encouraged him to run.

"They said, 'Mike, you'll like it,'" Lindell says. "They encouraged me."

But that's 2022, Lindell says. He doesn't know whether he'll run for the state's gubernatorial race yet or not. He only learned about politics a few years ago, he says.

"When I came out of addiction, I'm going, 'Wow!' And I've learned now over the past couple of years, it affects everything we do," Lindell says he realized.

### **RELATED: White House Health Experts Say 100,000 to 200,000 Americans Could Die Due to Coronavirus**

Inside the Oval Office on Monday, the fiercely loyal Trump ally says he and the president talked about business and an idea to put health care workers at the front doors of public buildings to make sure customers aren't carrying the virus. The pair also discussed whether churches could be considered an "essential business" during social distancing shutdowns.

"We need to get people back working and people in churches," Lindell tells PEOPLE. "This is sad that this is going on and our churches are getting attacked."

The president — who has faced his own share of criticism from evangelical voters in recent months — had already pushed back his dream date of April 16, Easter, to reopen the U.S. after weeks of isolation due to the virus.

“Wouldn’t it be great to have all the churches full?” Trump said during a Fox News interview last Tuesday. “You’ll have packed churches all over our country. I think it’ll be a beautiful time.”

President Trump’s response to the coronavirus pandemic has been widely criticized, especially from a growing list of governors who say the federal government needs to do more to send necessary medical supplies to states reeling with the effects of the outbreak.

Instead, Trump has trumpeted private businesses like Lindell’s that he says are stepping up to help the country in a time of crisis.

But while the president’s past life as a reality television star was well-known before he was elected in 2016, Trump still draws criticism and shock when he involves politically loyal business leaders to speak at the presidential podium.

“Don’t give me the MyPillow guy doing a song and dance when people are dying in Queens!” New York City sportscaster and longtime Trump ally Mike Francesa said in response to Monday’s press conference.

“We don’t need to hear from the My Pillow guy, we need to hear from the My Face-Mask guy and My Ventilator guy and the My Virus Test guy,” another viral tweet criticizing Lindell’s appearance read.

The Trump campaign defended Lindell’s standing alongside the president in the time of a global crisis.

“Mike Lindell is a great American and is grateful to the country that gave him a second chance at life,” Trump campaign spokesperson Tim Murtaugh told PEOPLE, referencing Lindell’s previous addiction. “He has become wildly successful through hard work and perseverance and is now trying to help his fellow citizens by converting his factory to make 50,000 masks a day. Instead of mocking him, the unhinged left should be appreciative.”

The White House did not respond for a request for comment.

Lindell says he’s since been “attacked” by the media, which he’s been speaking to all day, including an appearance later Tuesday night on Fox News for an interview with

anchor Lou Dobbs.

“I’m just trying to do a lot here all at once,” Lindell tells PEOPLE, putting the phone down to ask an assistant what time his interview is on Fox because he’ll need to change his suit.

Sounding rushed and filled with a sense of duty following his one-on-one with the president, Lindell says he’s flying to Denver soon to pick up a shipment of hand sanitizer he’s “experimenting” with to create a 24-hour sanitation gel he believes can help stop coronavirus and help his friend, Donald Trump.

“I’m very proud of what he’s done,” Lindell says. “I will not back down ever — ever.”

***As information about the coronavirus pandemic rapidly changes, PEOPLE is committed to providing the most recent data in our coverage. Some of the information in this story may have changed after publication. For the latest on COVID-19, readers are encouraged to use online resources from CDC, WHO, and local public health departments. To help provide doctors and nurses on the front lines with life-saving medical resources, donate to Direct Relief here.***



# Poynter.

## Anderson Cooper calls My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell a 'snake oil salesman' for pushing an unproven drug

**There's no evidence that a drug called oleandrin can help to treat the coronavirus. Still, Lindell called it a miracle. Cooper wasn't having it.**



My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell speaking at the White House in March. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

By: **Tom Jones**

August 19, 2020

# Poynter.

Did you happen to catch [Anderson Cooper's interview](#) with My Pillow founder and big Donald Trump supporter Mike Lindell on CNN Tuesday afternoon? It flew off the rails, with at one point Cooper calling Lindell a “snake oil salesman” and asking him, “How do you sleep at night?”

Lindell was talking about the use of oleandrin as a potential coronavirus treatment. He called it “the miracle of all time” and suggested that tests are out there to show it works. But when pressed by Cooper, Lindell could not provide details about any tests or why it hasn't been made public. A flustered Lindell blurted out, “There has been studies the FDA has not published yet.”

Eventually, a frustrated Cooper laid into Lindell, comparing him to a “snake oil salesman” from the Old West. He then said to Lindell, “You have no medical background. You have no science background at all. You have a financial stake in this company. ... You can't give any details about an alleged study of a thousand people that you allegedly have read, yet you remember nothing about it. This has not been tested anywhere outside one lab in a test tube ... yet you say this is the cure of COVID.”

In another exchange, Lindell asked why he would push something that wouldn't work. And Cooper said, “Money.”

When Lindell asked, “Why would I ruin my reputation?” Anderson said, “You don't have a great reputation.”

# Poynter.

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Here's why: Sadly, there are those out there who might believe this is a cure and will take it. It's important for news outlets to shoot down this harmful drug and it's especially important for Cooper to dismantle Lindell the way he did on Tuesday.

How bad did Lindell look? CNN "United Shades of America" host [W. Kamau Bell tweeted](#), "Anderson Cooper is on CNN right making the MyPillow guy look like a guy who shouldn't even be allowed to sell pillows."

Later on CNN, Dr. Sanjay Gupta told Wolf Blitzer, "What's going on here is that a totally unproven therapy that is actually quite dangerous is something that has made its way into the ear of the president. This is not something that you want to take."

Gupta said there has been talk this could be sold as a supplement, and that there are those who think taking a "supplement" can't hurt.

"That's not the case here; this one could hurt," Gupta said. "It has no evidence whatsoever in humans to show it could be beneficial against the coronavirus. I watched the interview that Anderson did with this founder of My Pillow earlier and he said that there's phase one and phase two data around this. There's not. ... You don't want to use this."



Fri, Apr 09, 2021

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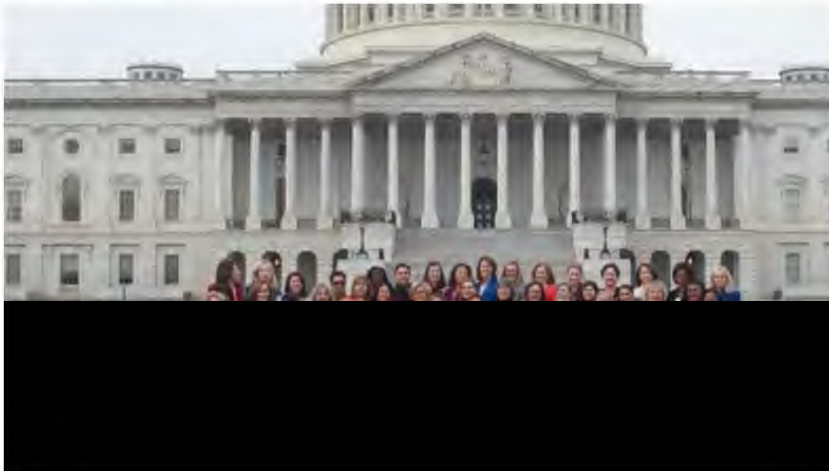
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## POLITICS

### Mike Lindell, MyPillow CEO, Tweets, Then Deletes Call for Trump to 'Impose Martial Law'

BY **BENJAMIN FEARNOW** ON 12/20/20 AT 11:54 AM EST



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#### THE DEBATE



#### Georgia's New Voting Law Is Racist

BY SCOTT DWORKIN

VS

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BY CHARLIE KIRK



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**M**yPillow CEO Mike Lindell, one of President Donald Trump's most ardent supporters both vocally and financially, escalated his "four more years" chants Saturday to include a new demand.

Lindell, whose MyPillow commercials have for years been advertised on Fox News, tweeted and later deleted a call for "martial law" in seven states. His now-deleted Saturday tweet echoed the president's own ridicule of Republican governors Doug Ducey in Arizona and Brian Kemp in Georgia, making unfounded claims that they sold out Trump by refusing to overturn their state election results. The CEO has launched into a series of rants over the past month, even calling for some Georgia voters to "go to prison" because Trump lost the election to President-elect [Joe Biden](#).

Lindell claimed that if Trump declares martial law in the seven states, his campaign allies could take control of the state's ballots and, apparently, overturn the results of the U.S. presidential election in Trump's favor.

#### THE DEBATE



**Georgia's New Voting Law Is Racist**

BY SCOTT DWORKIN

VS

**Georgia's Voting Law Doesn't Go Far Enough**

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Lindell claimed that if Trump declares martial law in the seven states, his campaign allies could take control of the state's ballots and, apparently, overturn the results of the U.S. presidential election in Trump's favor.

"Look @dougducey you made the list and your crooked buddy @BrianKempGA! @realDonaldTrump please impose martial law in these 7 states and get the machines/ballots!" Lindell tweeted Saturday morning, before removing the post an hour or so later.

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Although it's unclear exactly which seven states Lindell is referring to in his "martial law" tweet, it appears his post was in response to attorney Lin Wood's calls for a military and government-led crackdown in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nevada, Minnesota and Pennsylvania. Biden won all seven of these states, pushing him far beyond the necessary 270 electoral votes to win the November election.

Lindell's increasingly fanatical support of Trump prompted him to say he's the "greatest president" in U.S. history at a rally earlier this year, as well as demanding Trump "put people in prison" over his election loss. Lindell has joined Trump in badgering Republican lawmakers in several states where the two baselessly said there was voter fraud.



**Stems Tide of Cancel Culture**  
BY JOHN BURSCH

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president" in U.S. history at a rally earlier this year, as well as demanding Trump "put people in prison" over his election loss. Lindell has joined Trump in badgering Republican lawmakers in several states where the two baselessly said there was voter fraud.



"We have to get this governor ... Brian Kemp has to give an order to have a Congress meeting, whatever they do, their legislators, and pull Georgia down and don't give it to Biden," Lindell said at the Trump rally last month. "It doesn't matter who they give it to; don't give it to Biden and find out all your corruption."

*Martial law = Fake News. Just more knowingly bad reporting!*

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) December 20, 2020

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"If you pull down Georgia, Pennsylvania and crooked Nevada, now nobody has 270 [electoral] votes, and on December 14 it goes to the [Electoral College] vote and Donald Trump wins the election!" Lindell continued.

*Newsweek* reached out to MyPillow as well as the Trump campaign for additional remarks or any reaction to the now-deleted Saturday tweet.

Early Sunday morning, the president tweeted "Martial law = Fake News. Just more

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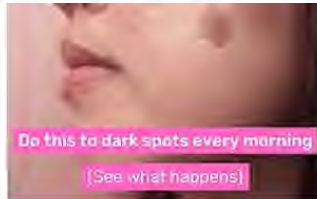
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Trump wins the election!" Lindell continued.

*Newsweek* reached out to MyPillow as well as the Trump campaign for additional remarks or any reaction to the now-deleted Saturday tweet.

Early Sunday morning, the president tweeted "Martial law = Fake News. Just more



"We have to get this governor ... Brian Kemp has to give an order to have a Congress meeting, whatever they do, their legislators, and pull Georgia down and don't give it to Biden," Lindell said at the Trump rally last month. "It doesn't matter who they give it to; don't give it to Biden and find out all your corruption."

*Martial law = Fake News. Just more knowingly bad reporting!*

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) December 20, 2020

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"If you pull down Georgia, Pennsylvania and crooked Nevada, now nobody has 270 [electoral] votes, and on December 14 it goes to the [Electoral College] vote and Donald Trump wins the election!" Lindell continued.

*Newsweek* reached out to MyPillow as well as the Trump campaign for additional remarks or any reaction to the now-deleted Saturday tweet.

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## Photos of Trump ally who visited the White House capture notes about martial law.



Mike Lindell, the C.E.O. of MyPillow, leaving the White House on Friday. Gerald Herbert/Associated Press

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/15/us/politics/mike-lindell-notes-west-wing.html>

### Timestamp

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Mike Lindell, the C.E.O. of MyPillow, leaving the White House on Friday. Gerald Herbert/Associated Press



By Maggie Haberman

Jan. 15, 2021

President Trump, isolated and watching the clock count down on his time in the White House, spent a few minutes of it on Friday with the C.E.O. of [MyPillow](#), [Mike Lindell](#), who brought some notes with him.

White House officials said nothing came of the roughly five-to-ten-minute meeting between Mr. Lindell and Mr. Trump, which Mr. Lindell said came after he'd been asking to get on the president's calendar for days.

But notes that Mr. Lindell brought with him, captured by a news photographer as Mr. Lindell waited before entering the White House, sparked hours of concern on social media about what was taking place with a president who as recently as Friday insisted to White House officials that he had won an election that he lost.

In photographs captured by Jabin Botsford, a photographer for The Washington Post, Mr. Lindell held notes in his hand as he stood outside the doorway to the West Wing lobby mid-afternoon on Friday. The notes included a mention of Sidney Powell, the lawyer and conspiracy theorist whom Mr. Trump at one point wanted to

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They were only partially visible, but there was also a suggestion about invoking the Insurrection Act, by which a president can deploy active military troops into the streets, and “martial law if necessary.” One line appeared to suggest moving [Kash Patel](#), currently the Department of Defense chief of staff and a Trump loyalist, as “C.I.A. Acting,” which seemed to indicate the top job.

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White House press aides were caught off guard by the photos as they circulated on Twitter, and said they had no idea what had transpired.

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**TRACKING VIRAL MISINFORMATION** Every day, [Times reporters chronicle and debunk false and misleading information that is going viral online.](#)

Reached by phone, Mr. Lindell said that he was carrying notes supplied to him by a lawyer he was working with to try to prove that Mr. Trump was the true winner of the 2020 election. He would not identify the lawyer.

“The attorney said, can you bring these to him,” Mr. Lindell said. “It was stuff to help the American people.”

Mr. Lindell said that he was seated next to an administration official, who another official later identified as Robert C. O’Brien, the national security adviser. Mr. Trump ended the brief meeting by directing Mr. Lindell to go upstairs to the office of White House counsel Pat A. Cipollone. Mr. Lindell said he showed them material but was sent back downstairs to wait awhile longer.



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Officials seemed “disinterested” in what he had to say, Mr. Lindell said.

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A second administration official said that Mr. O'Brien was called to the meeting after Mr. Lindell arrived, because advisers in search of someone who could steer Mr. Lindell away couldn't immediately reach Mr. Cipollone. Among the items on Mr. Lindell's list was replacing Mr. O'Brien. The national security adviser, seeking to end the conversation, said if there was evidence of what he was saying it should go to the White House counsel, and he steered him upstairs.

Mr. Lindell maintained that the notes he had did not contain the words “martial law,” although the photograph showed it to be the case. He said the “fake news” was stirring it up. An administration official said that the blacked-out part of Mr. Lindell's notes could be seen when looked at closely, and that they referenced firing Mr. Cipollone. The official said that Mr. Lindell got “loud” while waiting in the West Wing lobby.

Mr. Lindell has been one of the few supporters of Mr. Trump from corporate America who has stayed with him after the riot by Trump supporters at the Capitol complex on Jan. 6, which left five people dead and included chants calling for the death of Vice President Mike Pence. Mr. Lindell appeared on Newsmax, the conservative cable network, the day of the riot and pushed the now-debunked claim that “antifa” protesters had masqueraded as Trump backers in order to cause damage.

And even after President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory was certified, Mr. Lindell continued to insist that Mr. Trump will be inaugurated for a second term next week.

There was no move to fire Gina Haspel, the director of the C.I.A.,

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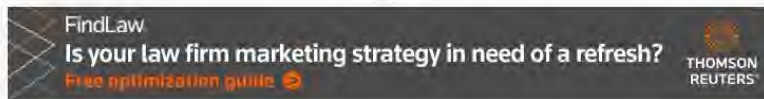
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There was no move to fire Gina Haspel, the director of the C.I.A., on Friday or have Mr. Patel arrive at the C.I.A. headquarters to take over, according to people familiar with the matter. And Washington has already become a militarized fortress ahead of Mr. Biden's inauguration, in order to clamp down on threats of new violence being planned for the day of the ceremony.

But Mr. Lindell's ability to walk into the Oval Office and meet with Mr. Trump underscored the type of conspiracy theorists who still appeal to Mr. Trump, so long as they are saying what he wants to hear. It is unclear whether Mr. Lindell wrote the notes or if he was passing along someone else's thoughts.

Mr. Trump has at times considered Ms. Powell too conspiratorial, as she has touted falsehoods about a global conspiracy to rig the 2020 election. At other times, he has welcomed her input.



Right-wing journalists have resumed demands for the declassification and release of documents related to the 2016 election, including material created by Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee, where Mr. Patel used to work.

Ms. Haspel has opposed the release of those documents. However both Mr. Trump and John Ratcliffe, the director of national intelligence, have the authority to declassify the documents, and the White House would not need to force out Ms. Haspel to make

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Maggie Haberman is a White House correspondent. She joined The Times in 2015 as a campaign correspondent and was part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize in 2018 for reporting on President Trump's advisers and their connections to Russia. [@maggieNYT](#)



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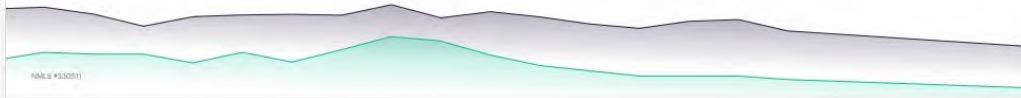


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Highlights of President-Elect Joe Biden's Transition: January 16, 2021 &gt;

## Who is Mike Lindell, one of Trump's last remaining supporters from corporate America?



Mike Lindell, the chief executive of MyPillow, waiting outside the West Wing of the White House on Friday. Drew Angerer/Getty Images

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/16/us/politics/mypillow-notes-lindell-trump.html>

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Mike Lindell, the chief executive of MyPillow, waiting outside the West Wing of the White House on Friday. Drew Angerer/Getty Images



By Annie Karni

Jan. 16, 2021

For years, [Mike Lindell](#), the chief executive of the bedding company MyPillow, has been a fringe character in Trumpworld. A major Republican donor who made his millions inventing a pillow made from shredded foam, Mr. Lindell would regularly pop up as a V.I.P. at Trump rallies. And he was seemingly ever-present on television in the West Wing as the star of MyPillow commercials, which aired constantly on Fox News.

In July, he met with President Trump at the White House to push an unproven treatment in which he had a financial stake, [oleandrin](#), as a therapeutic for the coronavirus. He is close with Dr. Ben Carson, the secretary of Housing and Urban Development, but he has long been dismissed by most of the advisers around the president as a “nutso.”

And yet, there he was on Friday afternoon, again, standing outside the West Wing, set to have face time with the commander in chief during his final hours in power. Mr. Lindell arrived with a concerning agenda: [A photograph of his partially visible notes](#) showed that he wanted to speak to the president about invoking

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It has been easy to treat Mr. Lindell as a comedic bit player in the story of the Trump presidency. He was a man the president thought was extremely famous because of his advertisements on cable news. He was a man the president would not dismiss, the way his advisers did, because he did not dismiss anyone who was rich and constantly on television.

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Mr. Lindell, however, was never really just interested in bedding. “The pillow is just a platform for a much bigger thing,” Mr. Lindell told students in 2019 at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. “My calling is to speak out the word of Jesus.”

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In reality, Mr. Lindell is a conspiracy theorist who has been spreading inaccurate information about election fraud since November, when Joseph R. Biden Jr. won the presidential race. Even after the violent mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol last week, Mr. Lindell went on television to promote the lie that “Donald Trump will be our president for the next four years.” On Friday, he said he was the emissary of a lawyer working to prove that Mr. Trump won the 2020 election, but would not say who the lawyer was.

Mr. Lindell is a former crack cocaine and gambling addict, who created his company while battling his addictions. He tells his own story in a memoir, “What Are the Odds? From Crack Addict to CEO.”

Friday’s meeting was a disappointment for Mr. Lindell, who spent less than 10 minutes in the Oval Office with the president before being shunted off to the White House Counsel’s Office, where he found no hearing for his proposals.

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But it's not clear whether the meeting was totally useless for Mr. Trump. In his memoir, John R. Bolton, the former national security adviser, wrote that the president had once encouraged him to stir up trouble by flashing a yellow legal pad in the White House briefing room, on which Mr. Bolton had scrawled notes about sending 5,000 more U.S. troops to Colombia.

"Go have fun with the press," Mr. Trump told Mr. Bolton, who claimed he purposefully made visible what appeared to be "confidential" notes.

Even if he did not intend to act on any of Mr. Lindell's suggestions on Friday night, Mr. Trump, through the antics (intended or not) of his loyal pillowmaking friend, managed to stir another round of shock on his way out.

Annie Karni is a White House correspondent. She previously covered the White House and Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign for Politico, and covered local news and politics in New York City for the New York Post and the New York Daily News.

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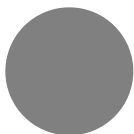
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# 'Conduct Yourself Accordingly': Dominion Warned MyPillow CEO Twice Of 'Imminent' Litigation Over Election Conspiracy



**Alison Durkee** Forbes Staff   
Business

Updated Jan 18, 2021, 06:12pm EST

**TOPLINE** MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell could face potential legal consequences for continuing to spread baseless allegations about election fraud—including at a recent meeting Friday at the White House—as the Trump ally is among a number of far-right personalities Dominion Voting Systems has warned could face litigation for pushing a conspiracy theory about the company's voting machines.



MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell waits outside the West Wing of the White House on January 15, 2021 in ...

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## KEY FACTS

- In a [letter](#) sent Dec. 23 and first [reported](#) Monday by the *New York Times*, Dominion's attorneys warned Lindell to "cease and desist" making false claims about Dominion's voting machines being involved in fraudulently rigging the election, warning litigation is "imminent" and directing Lindell to preserve documents related to the conspiracy theory.
- In a second letter sent Jan. 8, which *Forbes* has obtained, Dominion once again called on the CEO to retract his "relentless" claims against Dominion, threatening legal action and saying Lindell "leveraged your significant social media following to inflict the maximum amount of damage to Dominion's good name and business operations."
- Dominion sent a slew of [similar letters](#) to Trump allies in December, including Fox News personalities, Rush Limbaugh and [Rudy Giuliani](#), and Dominion confirmed to *Forbes* it sent a follow up letter to Giuliani on Jan. 10, saying "there is nothing you can say or do at this point to undo the hundreds of millions of dollars in damage that you and your allies have caused Dominion."
- Lindell, a prominent supporter of President Donald Trump, has repeatedly [pushed](#) the conspiracy theory about Dominion's voting machines and made false claims about election fraud, making [allegations](#) about voter fraud on social media as recently as Friday.
- Lindell went to the [White House](#) for a meeting Friday with President Donald Trump to reportedly push a voter fraud conspiracy theory that Trump's attorneys dismissed, with [notes](#) that mentioned attorney [Sidney](#)



[Powell](#), the primary spreader of the Dominion conspiracy theory who the voting company has already sued.

#### CHIEF CRITIC

Lindell told *Forbes* in a phone interview that he would not be backing down in response to the letters, claiming he had “100% proof” of his allegations against Dominion. “I welcome Dominion to sue me. I welcome it. Please,” Lindell said. “Please sue me...and then you can show us all about your machines.”

#### CRUCIAL QUOTE

“This morning Dominion filed a defamation lawsuit against Sidney Powell,” Dominion’s attorneys wrote in the Jan. 8 letter to Lindell, noting they sent the CEO copies of the lawsuit “so that there is absolutely no doubt at a future date about what was known to you at this juncture.” “Conduct yourself accordingly.”

#### BIG NUMBER

\$1.3 billion. That’s how much Dominion is requesting in damages in their initial defamation lawsuit against Powell. Dominion attorney Thomas Clare suggested in a recent press call the figure could be a conservative estimate, given the alleged harm against the company is still ongoing.

#### KEY BACKGROUND

There is no evidence of fraud or impropriety linked to Dominion voting machines, and multiple lawsuits involving the conspiracy theory have been [struck down](#) in court. Clare has confirmed the voting company will file additional litigation targeting Trump allies who spread allegedly defamatory claims about Dominion, describing their complaint against Powell as the “first in a series” of lawsuits. The litigation is likely to include media outlets who have spread the claims, such as far-right networks like One America News Network or Newsmax, and Dominion has not ruled out suing Trump himself. The company’s letters do appear to be having some effect, as right-wing website American Thinker published a [statement](#) Friday debunking the

conspiracy theory in light of receiving their own letter warning of potential legal action. “Industry experts and public officials alike have confirmed that Dominion conducted itself appropriately and that there is simply no evidence to support these claims,” American Thinker’s statement said. “It was wrong for us to publish these false statements.”

#### FURTHER READING

[Dominion Voting Systems threatens to sue Mike Lindell, MyPillow C.E.O., over false claims.](#) (New York Times)

[MyPillow CEO Meets With President About Plan To Install New CIA Director](#) (Forbes)

[Dominion Voting Sues Sidney Powell For Defamation Over Election Conspiracy—And Others May Be Next](#) (Forbes)

[Dominion Going After Right-Wing Media Stars Over Voting Fraud Conspiracy Theory, CEO Won’t Rule Out Suing Trump](#) (Forbes)

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**Alison Durkee**

I am a New York-based journalist covering breaking news at Forbes. I previously covered politics and news for Vanity Fair and Mic, and as a theater critic I serve as a...

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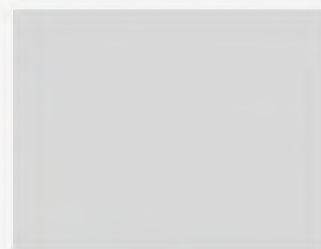
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## Stores drop MyPillow after CEO pushes election conspiracies

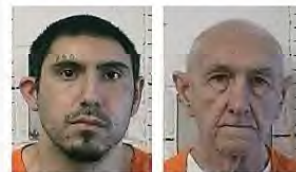
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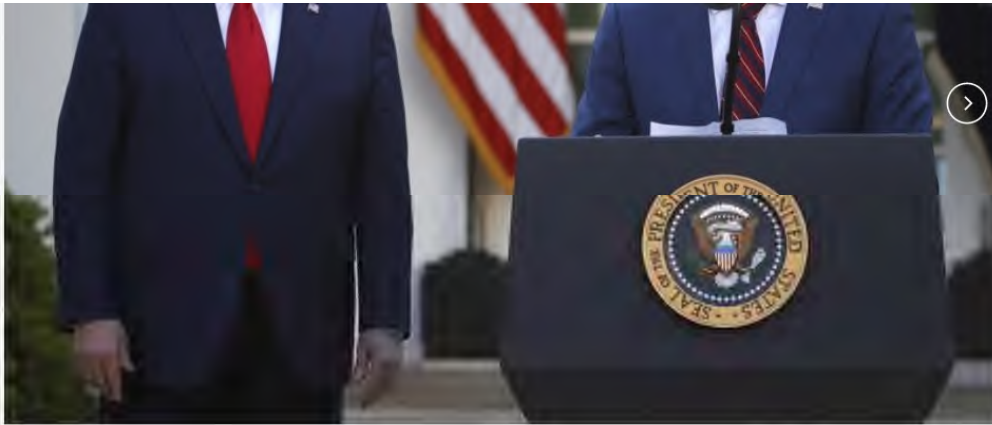
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NEW YORK (AP) — The founder and CEO of MyPillow, who amplified President Donald Trump's claims of election fraud, said a backlash against his company has begun after a mob stormed the U.S. Capitol this month.

Mike Lindell, who appears in TV commercials hugging the company's foam-filled pillows, said major retailers like Bed Bath & Beyond and Kohl's have dropped his products recently.

Both companies confirmed the decision to cease carrying the brand Tuesday, but cited flagging sales rather than Lindell's actions or his support for Trump.

"There has been decreased customer demand for MyPillow," Kohl's said in an email.

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Lindell has continued to push bogus claims of election fraud since Trump's loss to

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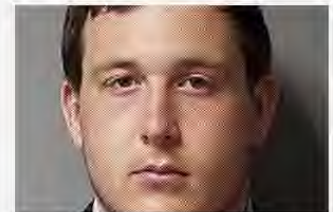
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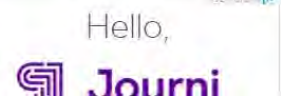
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Business Infoline

Lindell has continued to push bogus claims of election fraud since Trump's loss to President-elect Joe Biden in the presidential race. MyPillow's logo was also prominently featured on TrumpMarch.com, a website that promoted the Jan. 6 events in Washington, in which rioters stormed the Capitol.

That has led people to flock to social media and put pressure on stores carrying MyPillow to drop the brand. Lindell said products have also been pulled from online furniture store Wayfair and Texas supermarket chain HEB. Neither company responded to a request for comment.

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"They're succumbing to the pressure from these attacks," Lindell said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm one of their best-selling products ever. They're going to lose out. It's their loss if they want to succumb to the pressure."

Lindell said he doesn't regret his election claims or his support of Trump, who he said he first met in 2016.

"I stand for what's right," said Lindell, who created the MyPillow in 2004 and built the business in Chaska, Minnesota, southwest of Minneapolis. "I'm standing firm."

Aside from the retail pressure, Lindell is also facing potential litigation from Dominion Voting Systems for his accusations that their voting machines played a role in election fraud. The Washington Post reported that Dominion sent Lindell a letter earlier this month stating that they would pursue legal action against him.

Lindell said he's conducted his own investigation into the voting machines and hopes Dominion will file its suit quickly so that "all the evidence can come out."

Full Coverage: Business

Asked if he played a role in the insurrection of the Capitol, Lindell said he didn't support it at all.

"What are you talking about? I wasn't even there," he said before abruptly ending the

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#### Full Coverage: Business

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“What are you talking about? I wasn't even there,” he said before abruptly ending the call. “I have to get on another show. Now our conversation ends.”



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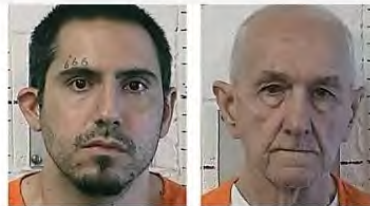


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SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The man accused of strangling the California serial killer known as the “I-5 Strangler” won't face death.

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BUSINESS

## Column: What happens to businesses when their CEOs become extremists?



My Pillow Chief Executive Mike Lindell speaks as President Trump listens during a briefing about the coronavirus in the Rose Garden of the White House on March 30, 2020. (Alex Brandon / Associated Press)

By MICHAEL HILTZIK | BUSINESS COLUMNIST

JAN. 20, 2021 11:10 AM PT



Mike Lindell is discovering the downside of becoming known as a right-wing crank.

Or so the My Pillow chief executive claims. He says that in recent days, Bed Bath & Beyond, Kohl's and Wayfair have dropped his product.

Lindell is convinced their decisions are related to his continued support for Donald Trump's claims of a rigged election, [telling Yahoo Finance](#) that the retailers were pressured by "left-wing groups that attack with bots and trolls."

*As more and more business leaders choose to speak out on contentious political and social matters, CEOs will increasingly be called on to help shape the debate about such issues.*

AARON K. CHATTERJI AND MICHAEL W. TOFFEL, HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

Bed Bath & Beyond said it's dropping My Pillow because it isn't selling well; the retailer called it one of a "number of underperforming items and brands" being excised from inventory, though it's possible that reflects consumer distaste for Lindell's position.

Kohl's, citing "[decreased customer demand](#)," said it would sell off remaining inventory and not order any more. Wayfair hasn't commented publicly.



Los Angeles Times

LOG IN



Assuming Lindell is correct that he's losing distributors because of his political stance, he has become the latest in a long line of business leaders whose business fortunes have been rattled after they became identified with extreme, or even just unpopular, positions.

The traditional rule for CEOs has been that it's best to let your products speak for themselves and keep your big mouth shut about anything other than narrow business principles. In recent years, the rule has become more often honored in the breach. That's because social conditions have led to a broadening of the principle of corporate social responsibility.

The redefinition has been driven by major institutional investors such as BlackRock, whose CEO, Larry Fink, has called on companies “to wade into sensitive social and political issues” in part because governments have ceased to address them.

Major corporations and their CEOs still take care when wading into political waters. They have been more willing to take a stand on questions with an economic coloration, such as the minimum wage and climate change, than polarizing topics such as LGBTQ rights, gun control and abortion, [according to a 2018 study](#) by Aaron K. Chatterji of Duke University and Michael W. Toffel of Harvard University.

Social conditions sometimes can change a precarious topic into one seen as appropriate, even mandatory, for corporations to take a stand on — the Black Lives Matter movement and the George Floyd killing, for instance, have placed support for racial justice squarely on corporate agendas.



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**Column: In praise of those anti-NRA boycotts**

Feb. 26, 2018

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But occasionally CEOs take it upon themselves to speak out. That can be a bad choice. [Same-store sales at the pizza chain Papa John's cratered](#) after its founder and chairman, John Schnatter, blamed the take-a-knee protests by NFL players for a decline in the league's TV ratings and consequently his company's sales.

Schnatter ceded his post as CEO and, following a later report that he had used the N-word on a conference call, left the company's board and sold all his stock.

Sometimes a top executive's comments don't have a direct impact on sales but damage a company's reputation nonetheless. That happened to the family-owned fast-food chain Chik-fil-A in 2012, when its president, Dan Cathy, [spoke out against gay marriage](#) in interviews with a Baptist publication and a devotional radio program. The company was also found to have contributed to organizations opposing LGBTQ rights.

Boycotts ensued, along with expressions of support by evangelist politicians such as Mike Huckabee. The company reported a 12% gain in sales for 2012. But the controversy plainly hurt. Chik-fil-A stopped contributing to anti-LGBTQ organizations and announced it would henceforth “[leave the policy debate](#) over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena.”



## Papa John's SSS 2016-2019



Papa John's same store sales (SSS) fell sharply after founder John Schnatter spoke out against NFL player protests in 2017. (Restaurant Business)


By 2014, Cathy was expressing regret for “making the company a symbol in the marriage debate.” [He told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) that aligning the company with “anti-gay groups” resulted in its “alienating market segments.”

“Consumers want to do business with brands that they can interface with, that they can relate with,” Cathy said. “And it’s probably very wise from our standpoint to make sure that we present our brand in a compelling way that the consumer can relate to.”

The most notorious example of a prominent business leader parading himself as a full-blown extremist crank is Henry Ford. From 1919 to 1922, Ford promoted virulent antisemitism.

Ford tied his views directly to his car company by publishing them in the Dearborn Independent, a weekly he owned, and demanding that the Independent be distributed to customers of Ford dealerships across the country. He published “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” a despicable Tsarist forgery asserting the existence of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy.

# The Ford International Weekly **THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT**

 One Dollar

Dearborn, Michigan, May 22, 1920

 Five Cents

## *The International Jew: The World's Problem*

Henry Ford published antisemitic claptrap in his Dearborn Independent every week for two years; his successors are still trying to eradicate the stench. (Library of Congress)

Ford's weekly campaign against the "International Jew" didn't seem to have cut into business at the company, which was selling a million Model T cars every year. He was finally forced to apologize as the result of a libel lawsuit, but to this day his successors and descendants still grapple uneasily with the legacy.

The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., devotes an entire webpage to Ford's antisemitism, but describes it as "a complex story."

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### When speech arouses boycotts

Aug. 31, 2009

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Regarding the articles Ford published in his weekly, [the museum states](#), "Seen within the context of the times, they demonstrate the sharp realities and tensions that emerge in societies undergoing profound cultural, economic and political change."

Ford's views, the museum adds, "were also influenced by current populist political sensibilities that advocated a distrust of financiers, bankers and institutions of economic power."

This comes very close to a whitewash. "Because The Dearborn Independent was published by Ford, it meant that other newspapers would pick up on what he said," Hasia Diner, an expert in American Jewish history, [observed in 2012](#).

Therefore, “it got much greater currency than if it had just been a small-town newspaper in some equivalent sized town in Wisconsin or Montana.... What Henry Ford says, people stop and listen.”

These cases taken together show that it can be difficult to predict how a CEO’s outspokenness will play in public. But they point to a few general rules of thumb.

One is that businesses with stronger products have more latitude to take stands on public issues than those without. Retailers aren’t very likely to evict Apple products from their stores no matter how Apple interprets its corporate social responsibility.

My Pillow, however, may be an easier target. As a private company, My Pillow hasn’t disclosed its financial results, but its sales don’t measure up to Ford’s, whether in the 1920s or today. And its products aren’t always universally heralded: [Consumer Reports](#), for example, questions whether it meets its “bold claims” to foster deeper, more comfortable sleep.

Two: Companies should know their audience. This isn’t always a simple matter. Not only does the customer base for Patagonia support the environmental activism of its founder, Yvon Chouinard — they expect it: “We’re in business to save our home planet,” [the company’s website declares](#).

“From supporting youth fighting against oil drilling to suing the president, we take action on the most pressing environmental issues facing our world,” the website says, next to a button allowing consumers to connect directly with activist organizations.



BUSINESS

**Column: Only now does Big Business finally discover the downside of supporting Trump**

Jan. 6, 2021

Three: Not all outspoken CEOs are equal. In a conventional environment, the hijinks of Elon Musk might have done real damage to the public image of Tesla, his electric-car company. Musk has promoted the useless COVID treatment chloroquine and [defied government orders](#) aimed at keeping workers in his California factory safe from infection. He has smoked marijuana in public and [drawn a government sanction](#) for misleading investors.

Yet these shenanigans only seem to reinforce Tesla’s allure for stock investors and EV customers. It’s fair to conjecture that enthusiasm for Tesla’s shares and products would fall if not for its identification with Musk.

It can be hard to distinguish whether extremist CEOs have a negative impact on their companies because of their views or their distraction by noncorporate matters. After building Overstock.com into an innovative online retailer, Patrick M. Byrne [veered into a conspiracy-infected fever](#). He announced that he had been serving as an informant against the Russian foreign agent Maria Butina, and plunged into the cryptocurrency world.

Overstock's profit and market capitalization plunged. In mid-2019, Byrne announced he had sold all his stock, blaming his decision on attacks on him by "organs of the Deep State," including the SEC. Under a new CEO and with a tail wind provided by a pandemic-related surge in online commerce, Overstock.com's revenues and stock price have recovered.

The old mandate to keep corporate executives out of the political limelight has obviously faded.

"As more and more business leaders choose to speak out on contentious political and social matters, CEOs will increasingly be called on to help shape the debate about such issues," Chatterji and Toffel observed. "Many will decide to stay out of the fray, but they should still expect to be peppered with questions from employees, the media, and other stakeholders about the hot-button topics of day."

They counsel executives to "select issues carefully, reflect on the best times and approaches to get involved, consider the potential for backlash, and measure results."

For all that, some business executives will find it hard to stay out of the limelight, to their own disadvantage. The best example may be a prominent businessman who has lately been losing corporate sponsorships and public credibility because of his extreme public positions while reportedly facing growing deficits and mounting debt at his businesses. His fortunes may end up defining the limits of CEO cults of personality. His name is Donald Trump.

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Mike Lindell declares that as a result of voter fraud lawsuit he'll soon be filing, "Donald Trump will be back in office in August."



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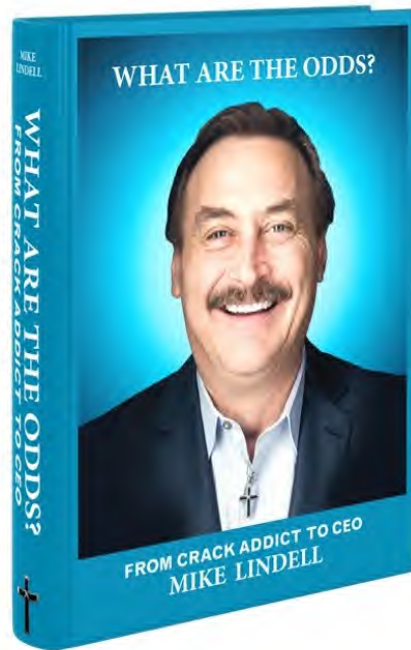
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## What Are the Odds? From Crack Addict...To CEO (Softcover)

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Mike Lindell, Inventor and CEO of MyPillow®, is celebrating 11 years of sobriety with the release of his new memoir, What Are the Odds? From Crack Addict to CEO. The book brings full circle a promise that Mike had been making for years to friends and fellow addicts that one day, he would help them and others struggling with addiction.

Far more than a "business memoir," What Are the Odds? is a raw, authentic account by a man many thought would never rise above his serial, addiction-fueled failures. Mike's gripping narrative transports readers from his small-town tavern with its colorful cast of "Regulars" to Mexico and a drug deal gone awry. From Las Vegas casinos, where Mike won and lost fortunes as a professional gambler, to a jail-cell beatdown. From failed rehabs to his 20-year marriage, an ideal union decimated by addiction. And finally, to the redemption of the most shameful moment of his life.

An unvarnished account of the ravages of cocaine, crack, and gambling addiction, What Are the Odds tells the improbable tale of how a small-town guy with a dream somehow made it from "the crack house to the White House." More importantly, Mike opens up about the God who relentlessly chased him down, turning him from a casual believer to a passionate evangelist with an absolute, mathematical certainty that God is real.

What Are the Odds? will speak to entrepreneurs, to people in rocky marriages, to those struggling with addictions of all kinds, and to people searching for God.

Mike Lindell's name has increasingly become synonymous with MyPillow. What started as a literal dream has now grown into a team of 1,500 people who

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Mike Lindell's name has increasingly become synonymous with MyPillow. What started as a literal dream has now grown into a team of 1,500 people who manufacture 60,000 MyPillows each day. The journey was not an easy one. Everyone told Mike his invention would never work and that he would never be able to patent it, but he refused to give up. In *What Are the Odds?*, readers experience what it's like to succeed, fail, and succeed again—on an unprecedented level—by persevering in the face of every obstacle. "In this book, I wanted to use the experiences I've had to bring hope and inspiration to others," Mike says.

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